

EUGENE WEEKLY'S

STATE of OREGON



A CELEBRATION OF OREGON BEERS

2018

CRAFTING A STORY

THE ART OF THE BEER LABEL AT NINKASI By Ester Barkai



Like a lot of other people, I often scout the shore while walking on the beach looking for just the right shell to take home, something whole and nice to look at, to remind me of the day. A beer label is like a shell in that it's a remnant, something to remind you of what once was.

Nick Yarger, creative director at Eugene's Ninkasi Brewery, similarly describes collecting labels in terms of nostalgia. They can take people back "to a certain place or time," he says. "It reminds them of something they had when they were younger or of a great time in their life."

Labels remind you of the beer you had and also of the day you had it. They act as souvenirs, taking you back to the place you were and perhaps the people you were with. And maybe even further to memories associated with ingredients in the beer; tastes that aren't often singled out any other way except through memory.

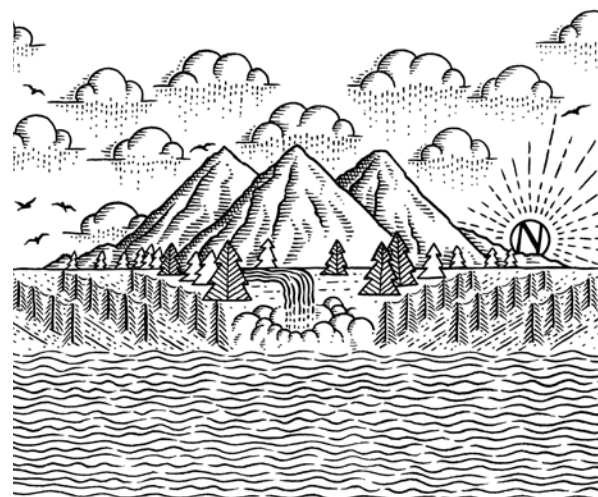
Yarger also collects, but not just the labels. "I collect the cans," he says. He likes the metal surface as a medium. Illustrations are normally found on flat surfaces,

on paper, so he finds viewing them on round, metal cans appealing.

He's been creative director at Ninkasi for around three years and guesses he has worked on about 25 to 30 beer label designs. One of his favorites is the label he created for Pacific Rain, a year-round flagship beer. The label features a graphic, triangular design that points to the location of local ingredients and type of beer: "Northwest Pale." If you tried this beer at the brewery tasting room and collected the label, you'd have no doubt as to where in the world you were when you had your first taste.

Yarger likes this label because of the simplicity of the design and how well it works to convey the message. It's "spot on," he says.

Graphic and logo design often aspire to simplicity. Think of Nike's swoosh or Target's target. When it was time to come up with a label for Ground Control though, a complex imperial stout that includes Oregon hazelnuts in its brew, the company went a different way, seeking out Eugene gig poster artist Neal Williams.



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STATE of SUDS



Ali AAsum is communications director and has been with the brewery for five years, long enough to have been present for the launching of Ground Control. She says that behind every label is a story.

The story behind Ground Control is a doozy. Before the beer was launched as a brand it was launched — into space. AAsum attended both times the brewer’s yeast was rocketed into space. The first time it was launched, by Civilian Space eXploration Team and Team Hybriddyne, the yeast was carried to space but then lost in the Nevada desert for nearly a month, rendering it unusable. A second launch was executed by UP Aerospace Inc. and the rocket safely brought back six vials of yeast.

Cofounder of Ninkasi Jamie Floyd speaks about the trip to outer space in terms of metaphor: “This is all about exploring the future of brewery.”

Ground Control is part of Ninkasi’s limited Goddess Collection series. Drinking this beer gives you a taste of space. That’s pretty cool.

To match this cool factor Ninkasi approached Williams, who has illustrated posters for musicians such as Queens of the Stone Age, the Dave Matthews Band, and Interpol. Williams was Ninkasi’s first artist-in-residence, and the illustrations he made for Ground Control feature detailed

line drawings of a rocket blasting off behind a Ninkasi astronaut hovering in space.

A Ninkasi artist residency is not the typical one you might find at a museum or arts center. There’s no time frame, and it’s not project- or mission-statement-driven. Williams came in twice a week for years. The current artist-in-residence is Rob Sydor. Ninkasi’s in-house art department relies on him heavily for photography.

Will Sydor’s residency last the same amount of time as Williams’ did? Yarger doesn’t know. It will last as long as it’s beneficial for both parties, he says.

I asked Yarger, who has a bachelor of fine arts degree, how he felt about the distinction some people make between fine art and illustration and design.

“At a very high level,” he says, “they’re the same, trying to communicate an idea.”

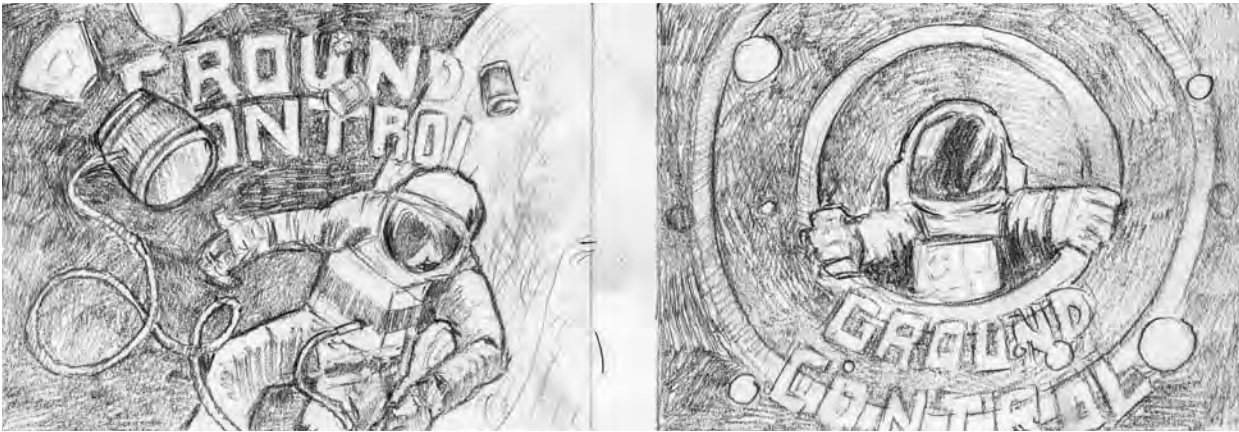
Anyone who has been to Eugene’s Bier Stein likely has been impressed by its refrigerated wall of beers. The place boasts over 1,000 bottles of beer. When I walk along that wall I am drawn to the creativity and playfulness of labels.

They often have literary, geographical or historical references, and I’ve noticed since moving here that certain Oregon breweries, such as McMenumins, Rogue and Ninkasi, go all-out. McMenumin’s renderings extend beyond labels to illustrations on walls of pubs and hotels; Rogue’s message goes out to Rouge Nation; Ninkasi’s NSP — Ninkasi Space Program — reaches to outer space.

Yarger feels that this connection between creativity and beer, and the appreciation that brewers have for art, is due to a passion for craft in general.

“It’s the craft aspect of it,” he says.

My appreciation of labels relates back to how I first started appreciating art — not in an art appreciation class, or in a museum seeing a van Gogh or da Vinci painting. My love affair with art began with illustrations in children’s books. The illustrations on beer labels, particularly present in Neal Williams’ work — realistic yet fanciful — remind me of those first stories.



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From left to right; Two Flowers CBD IPA, Special Brownies CBD Chocolate Milk Stout, Herbs of a Feather Lemon and Basil Sour.

WANT A TOKE OF CANNABEER?

MAYBE IN CANADA, BUT DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH
FOR POT-INFUSED BREW IN THE US By Taylor Griggs

As recreational marijuana becomes legal, some beer consumers may look elsewhere for their mind-altering substance of choice. With legal cannabis rolling out this summer in Canada, the Canadian beer market has started to look into how to respond to this threat. One option: cannabis beer.

According to the International Cannabis Business Conference, Canadian beer and cannabis markets are looking into merging. For consumers in the United States, though, it doesn't look like "cannabeer" — at least alcoholic cannabeer — will be in the cards, bringing up larger concerns about the clash between federal and state marijuana laws.

"It comes down to authority," says Mark Pettinger, the spokesperson for the Recreational Marijuana Program under the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. Since the federal government is in charge of alcohol regulations and recreational marijuana is controlled by the state of Oregon, he says, the two substances are in conflict.

Since pot is federally illegal — classified as a Schedule 1 drug along with heroin — it makes it tricky for American brewers who want to eliminate the middleman between a beer and a joint.

"Folks in the industry are experimenting," Pettinger says. "Brewers stand to lose their federal license for infusing beer with cannabis."

There has been experimenting in states where recreational marijuana is legalized,

and some find that they're fighting an uphill battle. One popular experiment is to infuse beer with CBD, the non-psychoactive component of cannabis, which some brewers find goes especially well with the hop-heaviness of IPAs.

However, according to Denver's *Westword*, Colorado brewery Dad & Dudes was approved for its General Washington's Secret Stash CBD IPA by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Association, only to be told later that the brewery had to shut it down.

Closer to home, Portland-based Coalition

Brewing could face the same fate with their Two Flowers CBD-containing IPA, but according to its website is still selling the 6 percent alcohol, 55 IBU and 3 mg of CBD per 12 oz glass beverage at locations around Portland.

In Canada, marijuana laws are handled at the federal level, which means making and selling cannabeer is possible. In the United States, this is just one example

of the disjointed nature at which the federal and state governments operate, opening up the potential for chaos regarding marijuana regulation.

Pettinger says that he doesn't believe federal cannabis reclassification will happen in the near future, condemning it to state-by-state regulation.

So, as long as the federally-operated Tobacco and Tax Bureau controls alcohol, and marijuana is classified as a Schedule 1 drug, don't count on cannabeer being legal in Oregon — or the whole U.S. — anytime soon.



EUGENE BEER WEEK IS BREWING

JUNE 2-10 IS THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF CRAFT BREWING
IN AND AROUND EUGENE By Bob Keefer

Enjoy all things beer-related as the eighth-annual Eugene Beer Week kicks off with The Bier Stein's Invitational Beer Fest Saturday, June 2, and continues through Sunday, June 10, at venues all around town.

Its objective, organizers say, is to shine a light on craft beer made in the Willamette Valley.

"There is a really rich history of brewing in Eugene, and a rich history of research and development in the valley," says organizer Mike Coplin, one of the owners of 16 Tons Taphouse in Eugene, which sells a variety of local brews.

"Eugene Beer Week was loosely modeled on beer weeks in San Francisco and Seattle," he says. "It's a really fun, all-inclusive event."

Beer Week events will take place at most breweries and some non-breweries as well. Most events are free, though some — such as a pairing dinner — will cost money.

Among some of the highlights:

Springfield's Public House is the newest incarnation of Sprout!, the former food incubator at the old First Christian Church building at 418 A Street. It will be holding beer-related events daily from Tuesday, June 5, through Sunday, June 10, though not on Friday, June 8.

In Eugene, beergarden., 777 W. 6th Avenue, will hold a "pop-up pub" from Monday, June 4, through Thursday, June 7, with more than 25 Modern Times beers on tap.

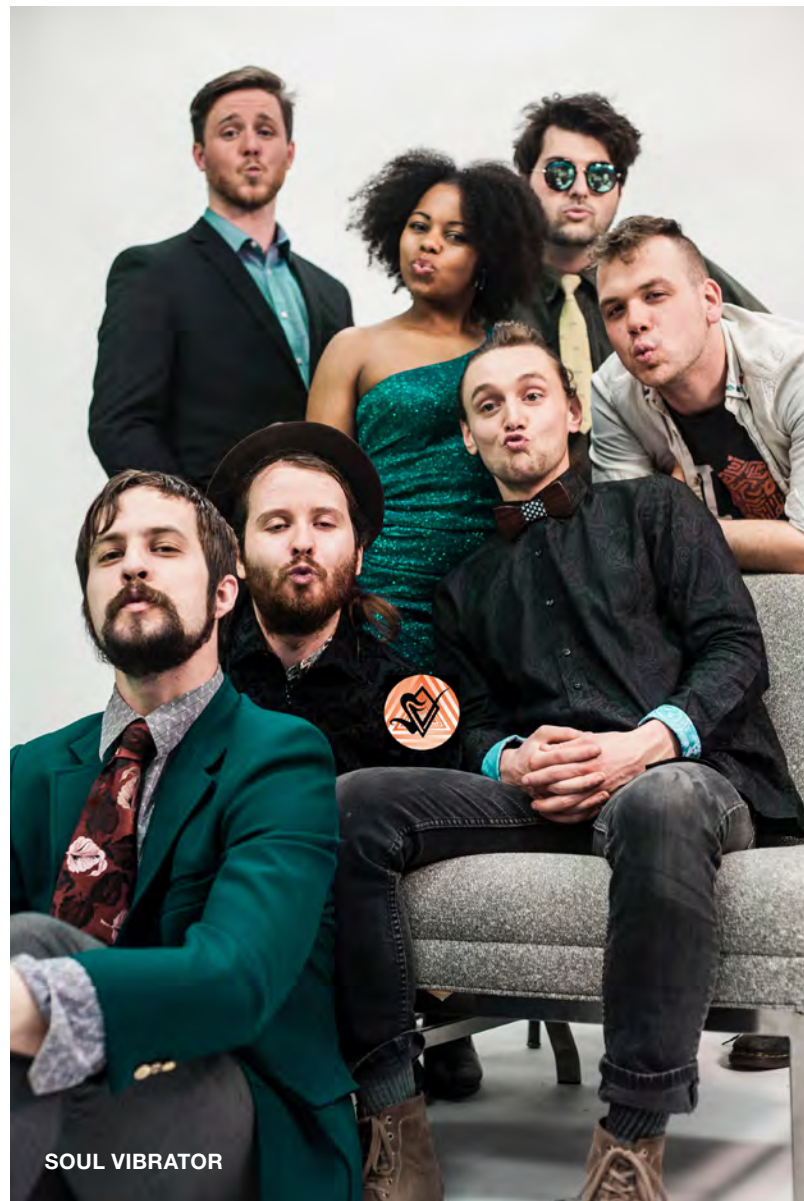
The Bier Stein's Beer Fest runs noon to 8 pm Saturday, June 2, and will include slices from Oregon Wood Fire Pizza and music by High Tolerance and Soul Vibrator. The Bier Stein will also hold a pairing dinner with Eugene's Oakshire Brewing from 6 to 9 pm Tuesday, June 5; tickets are \$65 in advance at the bar.

Local craft brewing started in Eugene in the 1980s, Coplin says, pushed forward by the botanical development of the Cascade hop at Oregon State University, which inspired now-gone Eugene breweries such as the Wild Duck and Fields.

Cascade was bred at OSU by botanist Jack Horner; it was released in the early 1970s and is now the most popular variety of hops used by craft breweries in the United States. It was first used commercially in 1976 by California's New Albion Brewing, said to be the first modern craft brewery in the U.S., in its American pale ale.

Eugene now has about a dozen craft breweries, Coplin says, and all are participating in Beer Week.

For a complete list of events, see eugenebeerweek.org.



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PHOTO BY TODD COOPER

SHANDIES AND RADLERS FOR THE FIZZY, FRUITY BEER DRINKER By Camilla Mortensen

Maybe my taste, or lack of it, for beer was ruined back when I was a toddler and my dad used to let me slurp the foam off his icy cold bottle of Budweiser, but I'm just not a beer person. I hate hops.

And yeah, someone would probably call child services these days over the beer-foam slurping, but in my youth that was pretty much considered an adorable photo opp.

While I have no problem sipping straight whiskey, IPAs make me cringe. So I'm that person who, when faced with a beer-only booze selection, looks at the server and says, "Something sweet and stout or something light and fruity."

The trick is to say it with no shame, and generally you get steered in the right direction.

For example, in the recent winter months my stout side was appeased by Hilltop's (Plank Town's new location in Pleasant Hill) barrel-aged Hobbit's Habit Olde Ale. But now that summer is here, I want something light and fizzy.

Enter radlers and shandies.

I first discovered the shandy while living in Wisconsin, where Leinenkugel's are everywhere (and kind of like Hop Valley, it's owned by MillerCoors). Shandies, originally shandygaff, are basically a soft drink mixed with beer. It's the perfect summer drink. Light, fruity, refreshing, and low in alcohol (4.2 percent ABV), a Leinenkugel's Grapefruit Shandy is a fizzy cold end to hot day.

Leinie shandies also come in Summer (aka lemonade) and my personal favorite, Pomegranate, which I've been finding at Bi-Mart lately, among other flavors.

For those of you who watch such things, a Leinenkugel's shandy is 11 on the international bitterness unit scale. An Oakshire Watershed IPA, for comparison, is a 70.

Leinenkugel's pretty much dominates the shandy scene, but you can make your own local shandy. Ninkasi has a recipe for a homemade shandy, made up of 8 ounces of Helles Belles lager, 3 ounces of watermelon juice and one

of lemon.

Radler is basically another word for shandy. The only distinction I've seen is that radler is a German word and shandy is English. As the story goes, the radler was invented when a German innkeeper was overwhelmed by a slew of cyclists and he mixed his beer with lemon soda to make it last longer.

Radlermass, the original name, means "cyclist's liter." And the low alcohol content comes in handy when it's hot outside.

While possibly the most famous radler is Stiegl Grapefruit Radler (and trust me it's delicious), those of us who are Oregon-centric can quaff a sweet Hopworks Totally Radler in grapefruit or lemon.

I'm not brave enough to start mixing beer and soda willy-nilly, but let it be known that I'm willing to try other people's recipes. Got any good local mixes? Let me know!

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KOMBUBEEF?

ROGUE ALES DEBUTS ITS BEER-KOMBUCHA COMBO,
AND WE GIVE IT A SHOT EW Staff

because no one remembered where the bottle opener was. Luckily our newest staffer, Henry, demonstrated his ability at opening beers with a fork. We poured, we drank.

Here are our thoughts.

Kulture Clash is a perfect drink for warm, sunny days of summer. The beer is light and crisp, given the combination of kombucha and ale. The characteristics do clash, but they have an odd resolution. It's not quite a sour beer, though tartness is present at first, followed by a sweet hoppy aftertaste. The downside to the beer is that its richness tends to linger on, making it a great beer to share with others. In other words, it's like cake: You really shouldn't have the whole thing in one sitting. — *Henry Houston*

I'm a Brew Dr. fan, but I have to be honest, my least favorite kind is the Citrus Hops because I just don't like hops (I do like cilantro though, for what that's worth). My hop aversion made me a little wary of Kulture Clash, but the sweetness and crispness of the first cold sip was reassuring. I later went and cracked open a Citrus Hops to compare, and aside from a strong hoppy aftertaste to Kulture Clash, the two are similar — so apparently my hop aversion is more tolerant of beverages higher in alcohol content than kombucha. I admit, I'm a stout or fruity beer person, so I don't think I'm going to buy a bottle of Kulture

Clash. But if someone hands it to me, I'm going to drink it, and the cool bottle means I'd definitely buy it for a beer-loving friend. — *Camilla Mortensen*

I'm an avid kombucha drinker and lover, but a neophyte beer fan. Pretty much I'm OK with anything that isn't too hoppy and bitter (so I generally think IPAs are pretty disgusting). That said, I really enjoyed Kulture Clash. It's a refreshing summertime beer that I could see myself sipping by the river or on an outdoor patio in the Eugene heat. It's an easily drinkable beer without being too kombucha-y for people who aren't into that. — *Meerah Powell*

If I hadn't been told in advance what this was — other than, "Hey, try this stuff, it's interesting!" — I might have liked it more. The fermented flavors of beer and kombucha are both slightly edgy and slightly composty, meaning they actually play kind of well together. But I've never been a real fan of kombucha and have probably consumed less than a cup of it in my entire life. Setting is everything for flavor, and all I could think as I sipped a half a glass was, "What happened to my beer?" — *Bob Keefer*

Kulture Clash is available at Safeway, Albertson's and The Bier Stein as well as other beer dispensing facilities around town.



PHOTO COURTESY ROGUE.COM

Rogue Ales recently sent *Eugene Weekly* a press release about its new, slightly strange-sounding beer, Kulture Clash — a combination of beer and kombucha. On the strength that both are fermented beverages, the combo isn't that weird, but it also sounded like something that could go very, very wrong.

Then again, we are (mostly) a newsroom of avid kombucha drinkers, so we leapt at Rogue's offer of a free sample.

According to the press materials, Kulture Clash (6.8 percent alcohol by volume) is "Rogue blonde ale specifically brewed to complement" a custom-brewed kombucha. Two of us, staff writer Meerah and

editor Camilla, are less than fond of beer, but love kombucha.

Meanwhile, calendar editor Henry and arts editor Bob like beer.

Henry was a non-kombucha person until his recent conversion to the fermented tea side of things, thanks to an ever-present supply of ad-trade supplied Brew Dr. in the *EW* fridge. We figured all this made for a decent cross section of beer-samplers.

Bob is an older guy who can't imagine why you'd adulterate beer with rotten tea.

When the spring-green bottle arrived with the Townshends's Brew Dr. Otis Sisgood sloth on the label, we stared at it, suspiciously.

To be honest, part of our caution was



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